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AMUSEMENT OF CONVALESCENT CHILDREN

I.

DEAR EDITOR: For some time past I have been wanting to express to you the great good and pleasure the JOURNAL affords me. This month's number is so full of good that I feel I must wait no longer.

Trained in one of the best and largest of the Chicago hospital schools, I returned to my own home eager for "cases," professionally, a stranger, knowing in all this city no one who "spoke my language." Letters of introduction are nice things to have and seem to be graciously received, and forgotten. But I have gradually become known and am glad to say do not lack for work.

The JOURNAL has been of infinite help, more especially because in it I found my only bond with the profession until quite recently when our own state association was formed. The Wisconsin nurses have made a very good, if somewhat tardy, beginning, and the association is composed of very enthusiastic women.

In answer to Miss Bradley's question—I have found all sorts of kindergarten toys helpful, card sewing, weaving, fancy cutting of colored papers, bead chains, building with blocks. "Plasticine" is a form of modelling clay which remains pliable and requires no moistening. A pad of paper and a bright new pencil are sometimes useful. Little boys like the paper soldiers that come at a penny a sheet, and a few cents' worth of colored tissue paper will allow any "little mother" to make her paper dolly a new wardrobe. Give a child an old "blank book," a tube of paste, and an old magazine. Each page of the book may represent a "room," the furnishing to be cut from the advertising sheets of the magazine. A few dried peas or lentils laid on moist cotton in a saucer will sprout and grow, if the cotton be kept quite moist, and will afford a great deal of pleasure. I think many sick (and well) children, have too many toys or games at any one time. One or two for a few days and then a complete change seems a much better plan to me. A good book and one that the child likes, a favorite game, and one form of hand work, are enough at any time. And I think in long tedious illness in the case of a child, it is well to have a storytime, playtime, and "work" time, just as we have our bath and rest and meal times.

There are so many "things I would like to know" dear editor, but I will spare you.

Gratefully yours,

A DEVOTED READER.

II.

DEAR EDITOR: In reply to Miss Grace Bradley, in the April JOURNAL, in regard to the amusement of children, I would like to give the following: Make a large blank book of nice clean stiff packing paper, by sewing four or five sheets of uniform size. Then make some flour paste, with a few drops of carbolic in it to keep it sweet, now hunt up all the old magazines you can get, and with a nice sharp pair of scissors you are ready to begin. Tell the child all about your plan and you will be surprised at the interest that will be taken in it. This is to be your housekeeping book. On the very front page arrange it as a porch, if you can draw well so much the better, to help out; cut out the things which go to furnish a porch, with vines, windows, etc., and paste them on; next page, entrance hall, with all the suitable hangings, pictures, furniture, lamps, etc.

The other rooms can be arranged as your patient and you decide, devoting one or two pages to each, leaving your kitchen for the next to the last page, and finish off with a back porch. There are so many different pictures in magazines you can complete a house very nicely, even setting the table in the dining-room, and giving the baby a bath in the bath-room. I had a little patient who was amused for weeks with this one thing (at intervals so as not to tire of it).

Another thing is to get large white beans and a box of tooth-picks. Soak the beans for a day in water and by sticking the sharp tooth-picks in, very many queer and funny objects may be made.

I forgot to say, that if a box of paints is handy, your house may be made more attractive, and more time consumed in painting things their appropriate color, the picture frames a light oak or yellowish, the tables mahogany, the ladies' dresses, etc.

I trust this may be of some assistance not only to Miss Bradley, but to others.

M. F. L., R.N.

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

DEAR EDITOR: I am much interested in what M. J. W. says in the April JOURNAL regarding the care of male patients. I feel exactly as she does. My first private case was a man in the country, two miles from a telephone, ten from a doctor, and he had to be catheterized. Now in my training school there were internes or orderlies to do this and we had never prepared or catheterized a male patient. Much to my chagrin I had to ask the attending physician to show me how.

About three months after graduation I took a hospital position, and for several years have had charge of a small hospital, with neither interne nor orderly. I have a training school and teach my pupil nurses how to care for their male patients in all respects as for their female. I cannot believe that it hurts them in any way. Is it any worse for a nurse to care for a male patient than for a male physician to care for a female patient? I think not. No hue and cry has ever been raised about that subject, I mean in our day.

I should like to add a word in reply to R. M. K. in the same number—I do not think any hospital is justified in sending out pupil nurses for cases upon a plea of monetary needs—but I do not think that takes away the nurses' work after graduation. In this town a great many people *cannot* afford a trained nurse. It happened in my brother's family that he needed a nurse for a critically sick baby (who finally died) for three weeks. The seventy-five dollars paid her represented a greater share of his month's salary. Not that he grudged it, or paid it unwillingly, but those are the facts.

Now my idea, good or bad, is this: Send your nurses out for the last three to six months of their training, according to the length of the course, and for not longer than a week at a time. Give them a third or half of the fees. In this way it seems to me they would learn to meet all emergencies and the great middle class be cared for. They don't like practical nurses, but what are they to do unless we help? Of course this nursing should be only for those really unable to pay graduate prices. I suppose that once in a while we would be imposed on, but would not that be better than letting so many suffer?

Another case—another brother thought he could not afford a trained nurse. As a result his wife had cystitis for three weeks and a badly burned breast, the result of hot poultices applied for caked breasts.

M. B. N., R.N.